receive slices of bread covered with jam, lard or honey. 000

The technical aspect of preparing and serving food varies greatly between the city population, where the equipment is mass-produced, and some isolated rural areas, where primitive cutlery and utensils have not yet disappeared. 252 369

Since the canned goods industry produces largely for exportation, the preservation of food is done in individual homes, even in the large cities. For this purpose, several techniques are current: bottling by sterilisation, pickling, salting, drying and smoking, clamping and other types of pit-storage. Rural communities located near water have ice-pits. 251

Among the alcoholic beverages, wine, of which world-famous brands are produced in Hungary, is the most important. Home distilled brandies are made of apricots, prunes, plums, pears, lees of wine, marc, etc. Beer drinking, along with the use of coffee or tea, is rather limited to urban areas. 273 [272]

Smoking is a widespread habit. The rural population generally prefers the pipe (few of them chew tobacco), but smoking of cigarettes is now spreading from the cities. The typical Hungarian pipe is long-stemmed (about two spans) with a bowl made out of wood or clay. 276

of the Hungarians Good Lord deliver us !» These terrifying arrows have also become children's toys in our days... Two worlds preserved the things men used in ancient time: the world of primitive people and the world of children. In these two worlds the King of Whitsun lives. In one quite seriously, in the other only as a game. 527 883 851

In some parts of the country merely the name «little queen of Whitsun» is still alive, but her four companions, who represent the four evangelists, bear no trace of pagan influence. The first mentions a lion, the second an angel, the third a lamb: the symbols of the evangelists. The fourth ought to mention the eagle, but he only refers to the regal bird's empire of the clouds in the air, and in a way which almost suggests rain conjuring:

Oh wine, dear wine,
Has no cloud been this way?
A cloud shall come this way
From the lofty sky!

A veil however covers the face of the little queen according to ancient custom...

The feast of wheat

«Wheat, wine, peace and a good looking wife !» — Thus does the Hungarian man summarize the collection of wishes he expects life to fulfil for him, — or which he wants to gain in his fight with Fate. The wine of Tokaj, Eger, Badacsony, Somlyó, the bread and festive cakes of the Tisza district, stay in the memory of the person who has once tasted them. Did we wish to express the longing for these things in a popular form, we would say: 252 ●

Whoever has drunk the water of the Tisza,
Always longs to come back to it!

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252 The water of the Tisza is naturally merely a symbol behind which lurks the delicious magic of the famous and hereditary Hungarian cooking and the science of a good vintage.

According to a proverb: «Poor people cook with water», or in other words, thus does the Hungarian land distribute its products:

Beans and peas for the peasant,
Lucious venison for the lords...

Undoubtedly not all Hungarians live in the same way, though Hungarian «lords» have also learnt to do without venison in these unending lean years. But it is certain that even the Hungarian poor, especially the inhabitants of the Great Plain, were always very particular about their bread; and to this day they use a characteristic proverb aimed at the poorer, or perhaps merely more thrifty or more frugal people:

They have everything, like Árpád,
Except bread and bacon.

If the extent of any knowledge is to be measured by the number of technical terms in use, then the science of Hungarian wheat growing and bread baking must be on an extraordinarily high level. The farmer tells the miller how he is to mill his pure wheat: he is to make it *soft, sharp, flaming, sieve like,* with *small pollard,* or with *rough pollard.* All these are special technical varieties which not only the miller but every peasant woman knows. When a sewing girl or a barber's assistant hurries his or her companions and asks that the «thing be done like rough pollard», it means that it shall be done very quickly, in the same sort of hurry as a mill working in a rough way.

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252 A number of petty technical terms indicate the right procedure for kneading, its right or wrong result: similarly every step in heating the oven, the reason for it and how far it should go is also accurately expressed, no less than the successful or bad result of the bread itself. Good bread is: bloated, loose, smart, it must be full of blisters! If it is no good, then it must suffer from one of the following defects: either it is *flat*, *notty*, *sticky*, *pasty*, *doughy*, *torn*, *stodgy* or *heavy*. The woman who cannot bake bread deserves to be laughed at even by her lawful husband, and is derided in this song:

She can bake fine bread:
Twice she puts leaven into it!

She kneads it five-six times,
Yet forms it into loaves while unleavened!

She makes five-six fires in the stove,
Yet she takes it out unleavened!

Oh dear, dear, dear, oh dear me,
Until the end of my life I'll be sorry...
Why on earth did I ever get married!

It would be even worse if we were to quote all the technical terms referring to cakes which on account of their varied appetizing forms are known all over the country. These terms would make up a whole dictionary which could not possibly be translated into another language, just like the many expressions concerning the pastry which can be cooked into a soup or boiled separately. We shall merely mention «snail pastry» which is cooked with the wedding chicken soup, because the implements with which it is made are worth noticing in connection with Hungarian popular art. Friends, relations, companions, all come together to make the enormous amount of «snail pastry»

252 required, and each person brings his or her own implement. They cannot turn up with any odd one in such a gathering, so each person brings proudly a decorated one, just as girls only take to the spinnery the distaffs which their lovers have so beautifully carved.

773 The great importance and distinction of bread makes it necessary that it shall be duly honoured when still in the form of wheat, all the more so as the Creator himself carved man's face on every ripe grain. According to a Legend, when God had turned man out of the Garden of Eden, he ordered him to search for the grain bearing his image, to grow it and work for it with the sweat of his brow, «because, although he had heard that it would mean death, he forgot and ate of the forbidden fruit».

788 The blessing of the wheat crop by the Church, which takes place on the day of Saint Mark, has therefore a great importance and meaning in Hungarian life. It is at the end of April, there is hope of life and the young crops are green like untouched promises. The people go in procession to the chosen wheat field where, under God's free sky, the future bread is blessed. Each person returns to his home with one ear from the field which has been blessed, — with a promise of new hope. It is blessed, so that «fog shall not strangle, hail shall not destroy, storm shall not trample, fire shall not consume the only hope of the poor». Later on the Calvinists at their communion thank God with fresh bread for having watched the growth of the crops. In some districts ears picked from the blessed field are supposed to have a healing, increasing or magic effect, and therefore they are greatly esteemed.

241 But let us get down to work! It is Peter and Paul's
527 day, the stalk of the wheat is torn, and when the wind touches it, it undulates in golden waves. Poor people do the reaping themselves, helped by their family. Those

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The feast in celebration of the killing of the pigs

262
[252] Besides bread, the favourite food of poor people in Hungary is bacon. They eat it «white», with salt or pepper, smoked, boiled or roasted. In the arrangements made with servants, in the contracts drawn up with reapers, bacon is always mentioned. When the hero of Hungarian fairy tales starts on his journey, unless he is so poor that he can merely afford flead cakes baked in ashes, his mother puts bread and bacon into his wallet. When the minstrels describe all they see about the farmer's house, their chief admiration goes out to the wonderful pig. They see big, twisted rolls, two tankards of beer, the ears of the oxen filled with cracknels, and all kind of other good things, but their phantasy is most vivid as regards the distribution of sausages and bacon :

> Across his back there are sixty sausages,
> Half of them are for the minstrels;
> Along his back there are hundred pieces of bacons,
> Half of these are for the minstrels . . .

Even the learned professor, who has reconstructed this song after the ancient text, is bound to smile when he explains that : — «Besides the sixty sausages one hundred pieces of bacon had ample place on the back of the gigantic pig : one lot went across, the other along his back . . .»

252
264 If Hungarian people make an excursion on one of their leisurely afternoons into their vineyard or to some other pleasant spot, and take their food with them, they may have a hundred different dainty tit-bits in their picnic baskets, (which is not suprising in a country, in which a cookery

book written in 1622 contains 189 recipes for the thirty kinds of fish existing in it) yet the whole entertainment is still called : — bacon roasting.

A poor man begins with one sucking pig, to end with a pig weighing a ton ; but at a well-to-do house, particularly on the Great Plain, especially if the summer workmen have to be considered besides the people making up the household, six to eight pigs are killed in one winter. Amongst poor people it is the wife's duty to bring up and fatten the pig. She cares for it, even fondles it. She becomes proud of the dear little brute ; she watches it from day to day, — how it grows, improves, puts on weight. From time to time she tries to lift it up by the tail, as long as she can cope with its weight. Gradually the animal gets «ripe», it is already in the middle of November when it refuses to eat anymore. And when Elisabeth shakes her petticoat, — that is if it snows on Elisabeth's day (the 19th of November) they kill it, unless they prefer to wait until Catherine's, Andrew's or Lucia's day, — or even — if there is no hurry — until the middle of the two Christmasses (the period between «great» and «small» Christmas, that is between Christmas and New Year).

The killing of the pig is counted as a family feast, the children do not even go to school on that day. They feast, celebrating the event of having killed the pig. But there is a great deal of work before that. Practically every Hungarian farmer is an expert at killing and preparing the pig. If several pigs are killed, the farmer calls in only his good friends and pals, and the feast is really the reward for their help which cannot be paid for with money — and it is not done otherwise.

Work begins before the light of dawn. The friends and relations come with lamps, on their shoulders they bring pitch forks, a few of them carry knives. First of all they